



# The Catholic Women's League of Canada BC & Yukon Provincial Council Communicator

**National Theme:**  
Here I am Lord, send me!



## Advent Traditions

This publication is not intended to replace communiques or reports, but is to share our events, success stories, and milestones with our members and Councils throughout British Columbia and the Yukon Territory.

# Advent 2025

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# Message from the Provincial President

As we celebrate the joy of Christmas, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the incredible spirit and dedication that each of you brings to our League. Your service makes a real difference to our parishes and communities, embodying the true spirit of giving.

May this festive season be filled with joy, peace and happiness and inspire us all to continue our mission. Wishing you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Blessings, Christa



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# Message from the Provincial Spiritual Advisor

Dear Ladies of the Catholic Women's League, one of the component definitions for "tradition" in the Merriam-Webster dictionary reads: "cultural continuity in social attitudes, customs, and institutions". Immaculate Conception parish-school community in Prince George, BC (where I serve as pastor) is a culturally-diverse one.

As such, I brought to our Parish Pastoral Council the idea that we celebrate our parish-school feast day (December 8 th – the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary) under the title, "Mary, Mother of All Nations," to honour and applaud the diversity of cultures who make up our parish-

school family. For it is my hope going forward that we will experience, for many years to come, the TRADITION of celebrating the "cultural continuity" of "social attitudes" and "customs" that enrich our parish-school family.

For TRADITION is at the heart of who we are as disciples within the universal community that is the Catholic Church! The importance of tradition is in our blood, our hearts, our minds, our souls.

May this Advent Season, and the upcoming Christmas Season, be occasions for us ALL to relish in the great tradition of safeguarding and celebrating that same valued reality of TRADITION! May the Holy Family, who undoubtedly celebrated their own traditions in the family home at Nazareth, bless you, and all whom you will celebrate traditions with, in these glorious seasons!

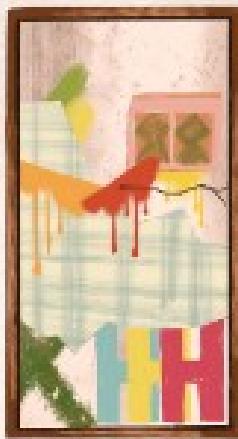
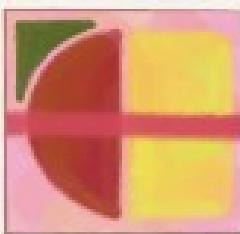
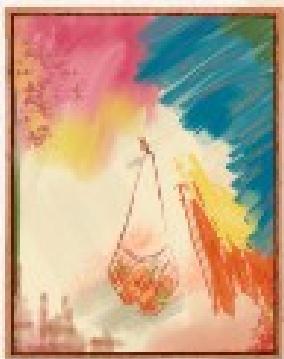
Peace+

Fr. John Garden (Provincial Spiritual Advisor)

Mary,  
Mother of All Nations



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# Art Contest

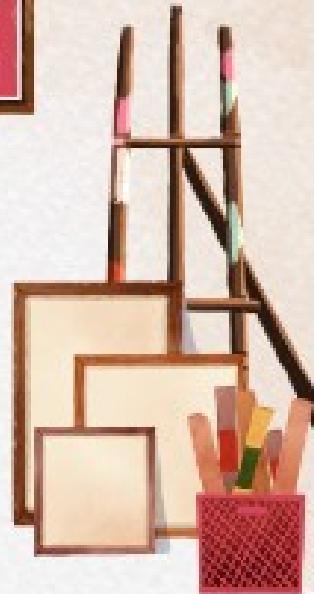
Calling all young Catholic women to express their joy and love of God through art

**JANUARY 15, 2026**

This contest is open to all young Catholic women between the ages of 10 - 35 years old. You can use the mediums of watercolor, charcoal, acrylics, oil, and pencil crayon only. Please send a photo of your original art with your name, address, phone number, age and email address to: [pastpresident@bcyukoncwl.com](mailto:pastpresident@bcyukoncwl.com) before the deadline. Winners will be announced at the BC/Yukon provincial convention in June 2026 at Sidney, BC.

**THEME:**  
**nature, animals, portraits**  
**with a spiritual theme**

First place award certificates will be given in the following categories:  
ages 10-17  
ages 18-25  
ages 26-35



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# Advent Traditions

Every December, my thoughts go back to our old “rumpus room” at home. I can still see myself there — singing Christmas carols for hours, memorizing every verse. It was simple, joyful, and full of anticipation. Our family owned a garden nursery, so December was always busy. My dad, uncle, brothers, and cousins were out hanging trees, flocking them with snow, and arranging poinsettias and wreaths.

It was cold, wet work, but that fresh, woodsy scent of evergreens made it all worth it. Even now, that smell means Christmas to me.

Meanwhile, Mom was at home making everything beautiful. She had such a gift for bringing light into dark winter evenings. Long before outdoor lights were common, she strung tiny white bulbs through the garden trees — a warm welcome for the season. Inside, she baked nonstop, filling the house with the smells of cinnamon and sugar.

As kids, we knew Christmas was about Jesus’ birth, but we also waited eagerly for Santa. Looking back, I realize those childhood Decembers held the true spirit of Advent — anticipation, preparation, and hope.

These days, I try to slow down and remember that feeling — to wait with the same joy and wonder I felt as a child singing in that little room, knowing something beautiful was on its way.

Wishing you a blessed and hope-filled Advent season.

Debbie Cloutier, Provincial Faith Chair

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## The Jesse Tree Connection

One of the most ancient traditions of Advent is the Jesse Tree dating back to the Medieval times.

It represents the family tree of Jesus from the root of Jesse, the father of King David. This is a visual way of preparing for the birth of Jesus, our Savior. Basically, it is a tree or tree shape, which is decorated with symbols of people in the Old Testament who were the ancestors of Jesus. As the symbols are placed on the branches, we are reminded of His earthly heritage.

To make this presentation you will need a tree with several branches for the symbols, which could be drawings, pictures or cut-outs. Begin with Apple representing Eve, then an Ark, for Noah who followed God’s instructions to build the Ark to save his family and the animals from the flood.

A tent for Abraham, a wealthy nomad, who was called by God to travel with his family and cattle, to the promised land of Canaan. A brightly color coat for Joseph, who was sold into slavery in Egypt but found favour with the Pharoah. Stone tablets for Moses to whom God gave the ten commandments for the Hebrews in the desert. A Crown for David, son of Jesse.

David fought Goliath and was chosen by God to be king of Israel. Temple is for King Solomon, son of David. He was a wise ruler who built the temple. Sackcloth represents John the Baptist who wore rough garments and lived in the desert. He foretold the coming of Jesus and baptised Him at the beginning of the public life of Jesus. Blue cloak for Mary, Mother of Jesus. She obediently took her part in God’s plan for salvation. Star represents Jesus, who is the light of the world.

Margaret Beardon, Life Member

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# Christa's Christmas Memories



I have so many wonderful Christmas memories. When I was a child in Austria, we celebrated Christmas on Christmas Eve. After we shared a simple meal of fish, my parents would disappear into another room. When they called me, I found the window open, and a Christmas tree lit with candles shining brightly and adorned with chocolates and candies had magically appeared. When I marvelled at the sight and wondered about the angel hair, my mom would explain that *Christkindl* (the Christ Child) brought the tree and must have left some of her hair on it. We then opened our special present that *Christkindl* brought and enjoyed my mom's special *Kipferl* or vanilla crescents. I still make those cookies every year to share with family and friends.

Our family is now sadly fragmented by circumstance and distance. As a mom and grandmother, one of the happiest was Christmas in Cuba in 2007 when we were all together. Since the holiday was our Christmas present, we decided to pick names and share a small gift. The kids picked names among themselves, and the adults did the same. The gift had to be

purchased in Cuba and kept a secret. This was especially hard for the grandkids – they were so excited when they found the perfect gift. On Christmas Eve, we chose a special place under the palm trees to exchange gifts. It was amazing to see the grandkids take such care to pick just the right gift for their cousin and gifted it with such love and care.

**Merry Christmas and may God bless  
you and your family.**

Christa Grillmair, Provincial President



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# Advent At Our Home

By Catherine L'Heureux

For over 50 years we have celebrated Advent, and I always look forward to this special time of year. Advent means “coming” and it starts the fourth Sunday before Christmas Eve. During Advent we prepare our hearts for the coming of the Messiah.

At our home we keep the Advent season low key, penitential, prayerful and peaceful in anticipation of a colorful, noisy, celebratory Christmas.

Interestingly the first Advent wreath was created in 1833 by a Protestant minister.

We start our Advent preparations in late November by going into the forest to get greens. I also make sure we have Advent candles for the wreath. The purple symbolizes prayer, penance, and sacrifice, rose joy and white is the Christ candle. Each Sunday you light a new candle. On the first Sunday you light a purple candle. It is for hope and is called the prophet’s candle, the second candle is for peace and is called the Bethlehem candle, the third candle is for joy and is the shepherd’s candle. The angel candle symbolizes love and is the fourth candle. The candle in the center is white, symbolizing purity and is called the Christ candle. Whenever you light a candle remember that Jesus is the light of the world.

Advent wreaths are round symbolizing eternity, God’s unending love for us and that Christ is the alpha and omega. We also like to beautify our wreath with pinecones, pink and purple ribbons and occasionally small seashells reminding us we are earthly pilgrims journeying toward Heaven. Remember to put the wreath in a waterproof container so that it can be watered weekly.

Fortunately, we have numerous Advent books to choose from either online sources or at your local religious bookstores. Several churches have them for sale at their entrances.

Music is especially lovely to have while celebrating Advent. You can either sing Advent songs or listen to Advent music.

Over the years each Advent season at our home was different. When our 5 children were small the prayers were short, innocent and simple. And they loved lighting and extinguishing the candles. As the children grew into teens it was a great time to hear their heartfelt intentions and concerns. Now they are grown up and have families of their own. We have 17 grandchildren! Today it is just my husband and I celebrating Advent. I love the peace and quiet and after a busy day it is nice to be together praying, longing and waiting for Christ to come again.

Happy Advent everyone and God bless you!



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# The Manger

I knelt before a manger scene,  
so many years ago,  
And was in awe, of all I saw,  
    My heart—it did race so.  
The infant bundled in the hay.  
The shepherds keeping watch.  
The twinkling lights—the glistening star  
    —the calm—  
    beyond my touch.  
The scene, impressed joy on my heart,  
    Such peace I had felt then,  
No greater love could I have known,  
    Had I knelt at Bethlehem.

Patricia Hayes  
Holy Cross Parish, Creston



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# About the Communicator & Submission Guidelines

The Communicator is published two or three times a year by the BC & Yukon CWL Provincial Council. We welcome submissions from parish councils, diocesan councils, provincial council members, spiritual advisors, and members of the Dioceses of Kamloops, Nelson, Prince George, Vancouver, Victoria, and Whitehorse.

**The link to the Communicator at the Provincial website is:**

<https://bcyukoncwl.com/communications/newsletter/>

## Guidelines for Content

- Content must be C.W.L.-related and reflect Catholic teachings and values.
- Theme-based articles (with the seasonal theme set by the Provincial Council).
- Parish and Diocesan celebrations, anniversaries and milestones. Photographs are encouraged.
- Inspirational quotes, prayers, and spiritual reflections.
- C.W.L. projects with photographs.
- **Note For Photos:** people need to be named (left to right); and for photos with children, permission must be obtained from the parents.
- Overall maximum length of combined photos and **text not to exceed 200-250 words** on one page.
- Any **graphics must be royalty-free**, and the source of the graphics must be documented in writing to the editor.
- Any C.W.L. member may supply a personal or formal article for publication to the editor, which is subject to be approved by the publication committee.

## Contact Information for Submissions

Articles for publication may be sent by email to Laurel Phyall at:

[secretary@bcyukoncwl.com](mailto:secretary@bcyukoncwl.com) or [info@bcyukoncwl.com](mailto:info@bcyukoncwl.com)

For a personal copy of the Communicator, requests may be sent by email to Laurel Phyall at:

[secretary@bcyukoncwl.com](mailto:secretary@bcyukoncwl.com)

## Deadlines for Submissions

Deadlines are set by the provincial council executives and editor Laurel Phyall contact:

[secretary@bcyukoncwl.com](mailto:secretary@bcyukoncwl.com)

The deadline to submit articles for the Easter issue is March 15 each year.

The deadline to submit articles for the Advent issue is November 15 each year.

Start gathering your news submissions for the next issue now.

